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On a Woman Who Survived Violation of a Big Snake Owing to the Power of Drugs¹

In the village of Umakai, Sarara district, Kawachi province 河内國更荒郡馬甘里,² there was a girl from a wealthy family. In Emperor Ōhi's reign, in the fourth month in the summer of the sixth year of the boar, the third year of the Tenpyō hōji era,³ the girl climbed a mulberry tree to pick leaves. A large snake crawled up the tree after

4. According to Kitayama, the monk may be Gyōgi who sided with Fujiwara no Nakamaro. This is why Kyōkai wrote about the retribution of Naramaro as well as Prince Nagaya who was also opposed to Nakamaro. See Kitayama, *Nihon kodai seijishi*, 269–330.

5. 奴 *yakko*, the same as *nuhi*; see Chap. I(1) a, n. 24.

6. Nara-yama, present Sahosaki kyūryō 佐保佐紀丘陵; hills north of Nara between Nara Basin and Kyoto Basin.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari* (XXIV, 9). Buddhist adaptation of the snake-lover theme which is also found in II.8, 12. According to Fujisawa Morihiko, a similar legend is found in the tradition of a tribe in Taiwan (see his *Nihon densetsu kenkyū*, IV, 43). A condensed translation of this story is given by D. L. Philippi, "Ancient Tales of Supernatural Marriage," *Today's Japan*, V (No. 3, 1960), 19–23.

2. Present Kita-kawachi-gun, Ōsaka-fu.

3. 759.

her. When a passerby saw it and warned her, she was frightened and fell to the ground. The snake, too, dropped down after her, wrapping itself around her and creeping into her vagina while she lay unconscious. Seeing this, her parents sent for a doctor of medicine⁴ and brought their daughter home with the snake on the same bedding, placing it in the yard. Then the doctor burned three sheaves (which means a bundle three feet high) of millet stalks⁵ and put the ashes into hot water to get fourteen gallons of liquid, which were boiled down to nine gallons and added to ten bunches of chopped-up boar's hair. After that, the people hung her on stakes by her head and two feet, and poured the prepared brew into the vaginal opening. When they had poured in five gallons of the brew, the snake came out and was killed and thrown away. The snake's eggs were white just like frog's eggs, and approximately two and a half gallons of them came out of the vagina, with boar's hairs sticking to them. When the people had poured in nine gallons of brew, all the snake eggs came out.

The girl, who had fainted, woke up and began to speak. At the inquiry of her parents she answered, "I felt I was dreaming, but now I am awake and all right." Since drugs work effectively, we should deal with them very carefully. After three years she died, having been violated by a snake again.

When man dies and leaves his parents, spouse, and children, he will say, "After death I will not fail to see you again in my next life." According to the law of karmic causality, one is reborn as a snake, horse, cow, dog, or bird, or falls in love with a snake⁶ because of evil deeds in the past, or is born in the form of a ghostly creature. Sensual attachments are not all the same.

A scripture⁷ describes it in this way: Once, when Buddha and Ānanda⁸ were passing a cemetery, a man and wife were making offerings at the tomb and wailing their attachment to the dead. The man cried out of his love for his mother⁹ while the wife wept.¹⁰ Buddha heard the woman crying and lamented aloud. Ānanda asked Buddha, "Why are you lamenting, Tathāgata?" Buddha said to him, "This

woman had a son in her previous existence. She was so attached to him that she kissed his penis. After three years she contracted a serious disease, and at the last moment she caressed him, kissing his penis and saying, "I will see you in my future existences." She was reborn as the daughter of a neighbor, eventually became the wife of her own son, and is now crying over the ashes of her former husband. Since I know the chain of causation,¹¹ I am lamenting."

Another scripture¹² gives this story: Once there was a child who was very light and could run as fast as a flying bird. His father loved him so much that he cared for him as he would care for his own eyes. Once when the father saw the child's agility, he commented, "Good for you, my child! You run as fast as a fox!" Then the child died, and was later reborn in the form of a fox.

You should think only of good analogies and not bad ones, for you will incur retribution [for what you say].

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On the Destitute Woman Whose Devotion to the Image of the Thousand-armed Kannon Brought a Great Fortune in Response to Her Wish for a Share of Benefits¹

Amanotsukai Minome 海使菰女² lived at the Ninth Street, Second Avenue, on the East Side of Nara 諾樂左京九條二坊. She had given birth to nine children, and, as she had no means of livelihood, she was extremely poor. She had been praying to the Thousand-armed Kannon³ of Anaho-dera 穴穗寺⁴ for a share of fortune for nearly a year.

In the reign of Emperor Ōhi 大炊, on the tenth of the tenth month in the winter of the tenth year of the hare, the seventh year of the Tenpyō hōji era,⁵ her sister happened to visit her and left a chest made of

4. 藥師 *kusushi*; see Chap. II(3)a, n. 125; II.7, n. 15.

5. 稷藥三束 *awakibi wara sanzoku*.

6. Or "makes love as a snake."

7. Unidentified.

8. Śākyamuni's favorite disciple. As he accompanied the Master for more than twenty years, he played an important role in relaying Śākyamuni's teachings.

9. There is some confusion in the relationships of the people involved. Although the text depicts a couple and a woman in this passage, the following words of Buddha are about a couple.

10. The woman cried for her present father-in-law and former husband.

11. 本末事.

12. Unidentified.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari*shū (XVI, 10). Similar to II.28, 34.

2. Unknown.

3. Senju Kannon 千手觀音; see Chap. II(3)b, nn. 138, 139, 141.

4. Although the text has 向穗寺, Kariya maintains that it is a compiler's or copier's mistake to replace 穴 with 向. However, Fukuyama says it should be read as 向穗積寺 and that 積 has been left out since the *Konjaku* gives this name. The Hozumi-dera existed in the city of Nara. See Fukuyama, *Narachō jūin*, 313–315.

5. 743, in the reign of Emperor Jun'nin.